

IN SENATE  
OF  
THE UNITED STATES,  
JANUARY 12, 1818.

The Committee of Claims, to whom was referred the petition of William Faris,

**REPORT:**

That the petitioner appears to have obtained a patent on the 29th April, 1797, for propelling boats, by wheels applied to the sides of the boat, instead of oars. This patent he alleges realized to him no benefit, as public opinion was unfavorable to the idea of its utility. The petitioner finding that difficulties must be involved in the renewal of a patent right by statute, when the term of the patent had closed many years, is willing to avoid embarrassing Congress by such an application, and therefore prays he may be allowed compensation equivalent to the benefit accruing to the public from his invention.

A report from the Department of State, made to the committee, is herewith reported to the Senate. The committee are not advised of a purchase of any patent right ever having been authorized by Congress, during the continuance of the patent, and they apprehend the case could hardly occur where it be eligible to allow compensation for an invention that may have been, for a long period, public property. The committee are by no means disposed to deny the merits of the petitioner's invention, nor its utility, nor do they feel called upon to decide on its originality. The allowance of the petitioner's claim they think inexpedient; therefore,

*Resolved,* That the petitioner have leave to withdraw his petition.

*Department of State,  
January 8th, 1818.*

The Honorable Jonathan Roberts,  
Chairman of the Committee of Claims of the Senate,

SIR,

I have the honor of submitting to the Committee of Claims of the Senate, in compliance with your letter of the 29th of last month, the copy of a report from Doctor Thornton, of this office, who is particularly charged with the business in relation to patents, together with the papers to which he refers, containing all the information it is in the power of the department to furnish, in the case of the petition of William Faris.

I have the honor to be, with great respect,

Sir, your obedient and very humble servant,

JOHN QUINCY ADAMS.

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[COPY.]

*Department of State,  
Patent Office, 2d January, 1818.*

SIR,

In obedience to the direction of the Department of State, I have the honor of enclosing a few lines to the honorable the chairman of the Committee of Claims of the Senate of the United States, with a copy of Mr. Faris's patent, and a small publication on the origin of steam boats, which will, I hope, materially assist the honorable Committee in their decision.

I am, Sir,

With the highest respect and consideration,

(Signed)

WILLIAM THORNTON.

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*Department of State,  
Patent Office, January 2d, 1818.*

SIR,

The honorable the Secretary of State, has referred to me the communication which you, as chairman of the honorable the committee of Claims of the Senate, transmitted to him on the 29th ult. for such information as the Department of State could furnish on the claims of Mr. William Faris.

I therefore send you a copy of his patent, which I take the liberty of accompanying with a small pamphlet, that contains information relative to steam boats, which will enable your honorable Committee to judge of the claims of Mr. Faris, as an inventor of the use of wheels at the sides of a boat or vessel. If he has any peculiar improvement, it would have been in the power of the honorable the Congress, to have renewed his patent, before it became public property, by the expiration of the term for which it was granted; but now nothing but compensation for the extensive benefits of his invention can be claimed: and of these your honorable Committee may form an opinion from an examination of the documents I have now the honor of submitting. As the pamphlet will be wanted for republication, you will be so good as to return it, after it has served the purpose for which I now send it.

I am sir,

With the highest respect and consideration, &c.

WILLIAM THORNTON.

*Hon. Jonathan Roberts,  
chairman of the Committee of Claims  
of the Senate of the United States.*

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*Specification of William Faris, for propelling carriages, &c.—Patent dated April 29, 1797.*

“A principle of action is discovered by William Faris to be of great utility, as it applies to many articles in common life. *First*, in four wheel carriages it operates as follows: The hind axle-tree fastens by a square mortice, in the hub of the hind wheels, the axle-tree turning in split boxes, fastened to the bottom of the wagon with bolts and screw nuts; a wallower, fastened on the square of the axle-tree, working in the centre of the wagon, right and left; turns in a space through the bottom of the carriage, the cog wheel on a spindle, inside of the wagon, plays on the wallower, revolving once, while the wallower and hind travellers revolve four times. The front wheels work as in common carriages, with a tiller through the tongue mortice, turning to the front of the wagon, by which its course is guided.

“*Second*. As it applies to raising weights.—Fasten the wallower on one end of the beams, round which the cable is to wind; hang the cog wheel to the outside of the station through which the beam is to turn, the wheel working with a back purchase on the wallower; increase the diameter of the cog wheel, and diminish that of the wallower, according to the weight you design to raise; form a plat for the laborer to stand on.

*“Third.* As it applies to moving frame houses.—Fix the wallower on the centre of the axle-tree, between the two trucks, (the trucks turning with the axle-tree, as in other carriages,) the laborers turning the cog wheel, with a back purchase, inside the house.

*“Fourth.* As it respects water carriages or boats.—Fasten a wallower on the centre of the beam, which beam turns on the gunwale of the boat, in brass boxes; the beam is cased from side to side, leaving a space for the wallower to work in a cog wheel, six feet in diameter, with a loaded beam playing on a wallower, with cross fans on the ends of the beam, working their way through the water. Thus far the subscriber apprehends the principle here discovered will be for general good.

**“WILLIAM FARRIS.”**

Witnesses,

**JOHN M'CALLA,  
HILARY BAKER.**

IN SENATE  
OF  
THE UNITED STATES,

JANUARY 13, 1818.

Mr. Wilson submitted the following motion for consideration:

*Resolved,* That the committee on military affairs be instructed to inquire whether any, and if any, what further provisions by law are necessary to secure to the heirs of soldiers who died, or who were killed in the service of their country, during the late war, the bounty in land to which they are equitably entitled.

